



IOWA'S ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

**ANNUAL
BENCHMARK
REPORT**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Iowa Department
of Education

**Program Year 2002
July 1, 2001 – June 30, 2002**

State of Iowa
Department of Education
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INTRODUCTION AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The purpose of this publication is to present the Executive Summary for the Program Year 2002 report on Iowa's adult basic education program benchmarks. The passage of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 [Public Law 105-220] by the 105th Congress has ushered in a new era of collaboration, coordination, cooperation and accountability. The overall goal of the Act is "to increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and increase occupational skill attainment by participants, and, as a result improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation." The key principles inculcated in the Act are:

- Streamlining services;
- Empowering individuals;
- Universal access;
- Increased accountability;
- New roles for local boards;
- State and local flexibility;
- Improved youth programs.

The purpose of Title II, The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, is to create a partnership among the federal government, states, and localities to provide, on a voluntary basis, adult basic education and literacy services in order to:

- Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency;
- Assist adults who are parents obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children;
- Assist adults in the completion of a secondary school education.

One of the major intents of AEFLA was to establish performance measures and benchmarks to demonstrate increased accountability in line with the major goals and objectives of WIA. Section 212(2)(A) of the Act specifies that each eligible agency (e.g. The Iowa Department of Education) is subject to certain core indicators of performance and has the authority to specify additional indicators. The core federally mandated indicators are:

- Demonstrated improvement in literacy skill levels in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills;
- Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement;
- Receipt of an [adult] secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent [Iowa High School Equivalency Diploma].

The Iowa basic skills core percentage benchmarks were established utilizing the Adult Education Government Performance Review Act (GPRA) indicator model disseminated by the U.S. Department of Education: Division of Adult Education and Literacy (USDE:DAEL). The Act [Section 212(2)(B)] also authorizes the Iowa Department of Education to identify additional indicators of performance for adult basic education and literacy activities. The additional indicator established for Iowa's statewide basic skills programs was the inclusion of the Iowa Basic Literacy Skills Certification Program. The certification program was pilot tested for one year (Program Year 1998) by four community college pilot sites. The results indicated that this program is a valid and reliable program performance indicator.

OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM MEASURES AND METHODS

The outcome from the first two phases of the National Reporting System (NRS) project was the development of measurement definitions, methodologies and reporting formats for the NRS, which become effective for the program year beginning July 1, 2000. The pilot phase also produced an overall framework of NRS operation at the local, state and Federal levels.

NRS Measures

The *requirements of WIA, consensus* among the stakeholders and advisory board members, and the *need for uniform valid and reliable data* were major factors guiding development of the National Reporting System NRS measures. Other factors affecting development of the measures included the need to *accommodate the diversity* of the adult basic education delivery system and the need for *compatibility of the definitions* with related adult basic education and training programs.

As a state-administered program, the nature of adult basic education service delivery varies widely across states in its goals, objectives and the resources available to states to collect and report data. It is especially important that the definitions for outcome measures be broad enough to accommodate these differences, yet concrete and standardized sufficiently to allow the NRS to establish a uniform, national database. Similarly, other adult education, employment and training programs with which adult education works have systems of accountability and outcome measures.

To ensure this accommodation to the diverse delivery system and compatibility with related systems, NRS staff conducted a thorough review of measure definitions planned or in use currently by all states and all Federal employment and training programs. To identify state measures used, for example, NRS staff conducted an evaluability assessment of all states in early 1998 and obtained copies of measure definitions from states that had their own measures. In addition, NRS staff reviewed the existing measure definitions used for USDE:DAEL's Annual Statistical Performance Report and measures and definitions currently planned by the Department of Education for Title I of WIA.

The NRS includes two types of measures (1) core, and (2) secondary. The core measures apply to all adult basic education students receiving 12 or more hours of service. There are three types of core measures:

- **Outcome measures**, which include educational gain, entered employment, retained employment, receipt of secondary school diploma or GED and placement in postsecondary education or training;
- **Descriptive measures**, including student demographics, reasons for attending and student status; and
- **Participation measures** of contact hours received and enrollment in instructional programs for special populations or topics (such as family literacy or workplace literacy).

Performance standards required by WIA will be set for the core outcome measures and awarding of incentive grants will be tied to these performance standards.

The NRS *secondary* measures include additional outcome measures related to employment, family and community that adult education stakeholders believe are important to understanding and evaluating adult basic education programs. States are *not required to report on the secondary measures* and there are no performance standards tied to them. The optional secondary measures will not be used as a basis for incentive grant awards. There are also secondary student status measures that define target populations identified in WIA. These measures are provided for states that want to report on the services provided to these populations.

Core Outcome Measures

The central measures of the NRS are the student *outcome* measures. While by no means the only measures that could be used to evaluate adult basic education programs, the outcome measures selected represent what a broad consensus of adult educators believe are appropriate for providing a national picture of the performance of the program. The multi-year process employed by the NRS to identify and define the measures included input from state directors of adult education, Federal education officials, local education providers, representatives of volunteer literacy organizations and experts in performance accountability systems.

The five NRS core outcome measures were selected to address the requirements for core indicators of performance in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of the WIA. Exhibit 1 shows how the measures relate to these requirements and goals for adult basic education stated in the legislation.

Exhibit 1

Goals and Core Indicators of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and NRS Core Outcome Measures

Goals of Adult Basic Education Described in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of WIA	Core Indicators Required by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act	National Reporting System Core Outcome Measures
Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency.	Improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem-solving, English language acquisition, other literacy skills.	▲ Educational gains (achieve skills to advance educational functioning level)
Assist parents to obtain the skills necessary to be full partners in their children's educational development. Placement in, retention in, or completion of, postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement.	Placement in, retention in, or completion of, postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement.	▲ Entered employment ▲ Retained employment ▲ Placement in postsecondary education or training
Assist adults in the completion of secondary school education.	Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.	▲ Receipt of a secondary school diploma or pass GED tests.

Educational gain, a key outcome in the NRS, provides a measure of student literacy gains resulting from instruction. This measure applies to all students in the program (except pre-designated "work-based project learners"). To determine this measure, local programs assess students on intake to determine their *educational functioning level*. There are four levels for adult basic education (ABE), two for adult secondary education (ASE) and six levels of English-as-a second language students (ESL). Each level describes a set of skills and competencies that students entering at that level can do in the areas of reading, writing, numeracy, speaking, listening, functional and workplace areas. Using these

descriptors as guidelines, programs determine the appropriate initial level in which to place students using a standardized assessment procedure (a test or performance-based assessment). The program decides the skill areas in which to assess the student, based on student's instructional needs and goals.

Exhibit 2 depicts the relationship among the major instructional programs and the educational functioning levels within each major instructional program. The educational functioning levels describe the learner's entry level ability in the areas of reading, writing, numeracy and functional workplace skills.

Exhibit 2

Relationship Between Instructional Programs And Educational Functional Levels

Instructional Program	Educational Functioning Level	CASAS Level	CASAS Standard Score Range
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	ABE Beginning Literacy	Level A	Under 200
	ABE Beginning Basic Education	Level B	201 to 210
	ABE Intermediate Low	Level B	211 to 220
	ABE Intermediate High	Level C	221 to 235
Adult Secondary Education (ASE)	ASE Low	Level D	236 to 245
	ASE High	Level E	246 and Above
ESL/ESL/Citizenship (ESL)	ESL Beginning Literacy	Level A	165 to 180
	ESL Beginning	Level A	181 to 200
	ESL Intermediate Low	Level B	201 to 210
	ESL Intermediate High	Level B	210 to 220
	ESL Advanced Low	Level C	221 to 235
	ESL Advanced High	Level D, E	236 to 245

After a pre-determined amount of instruction or time period determined by each state, the program conducts follow-up assessments of students in the same skill areas and uses the functioning level descriptors to determine whether the student has advanced one or more levels or is progressing within the same level. The state has discretion to establish the student assessment method used within the state, as well as procedures for progress assessment. The State of Iowa adopted the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) as the primary system to assess instructional progress. States may also use additional educational levels and skill area descriptors, as long as they are compatible with NRS levels and skills.

The remaining core outcome measures are *follow-up* measures, reported some time after the student leaves the program. However, the follow-up measures apply only to students who enter the program with goals related to the measures. For unemployed students who enter the program with a goal of obtaining employment, there are two measures: entered employment—whether the student obtained a job by the end of the first quarter after leaving; and retained employment—whether the student still has the job in the third quarter after exit. This measure also applies to employed students who have a goal of improved or retained employment. For students whose goal is to advance to further education

or training, there is a measure of entry into another such program. For students who entered with a goal of obtaining a secondary school diploma or passing the GED tests, there is a measure of whether the student obtained the credential.

IOWA'S BENCHMARK RESULTS

This section is designed to report on Iowa's statewide literacy program benchmark results for Program Year 2002 (July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2002). The section provides a review of the tables and graphs which display the results for each benchmark. The following sections provide an overview of each core set of benchmarks: (1) educational gains, (2) adult learner follow-up measures and (3) number of basic literacy skills certificates issued. The section titled "Iowa's Adult Literacy Benchmark" provides an overall state literacy benchmark to be achieved by 2010. This benchmark statement was designated as the literacy benchmark to be incorporated in the overall Iowa Community College benchmark document.

Iowa's Adult Literacy Benchmark

Background

Approximately 36-39% (N=800,000) of Iowa's adult population ages 16+ perform in the two lowest levels of literacy proficiency as documented by the Iowa State Adult Literacy Survey (IASALS) conducted in 1992. Adults who score in the two lowest levels of literacy proficiency do have limited literacy skills. However, they are not likely to be able to perform the range of complex tasks that the National Education Goals Panel considers important from competing successfully in a global economy and exercising fully the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. By the same token, approximately 61-65% (N= 1,287,000) of Iowa's adult population ages 16+ perform in the highest three levels of literacy proficiency as documented by the IASALS. The National Education Goals Panel considers adults functioning in the three highest levels of literacy proficiency as possessing the necessary skills to successfully complete in a global economy and fully exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

A key indicator of Iowa's adult literacy proficiency level is educational attainment. Recent research studies have concluded that attained level of education is the best overall predictor of adult literacy proficiency levels. A trend analysis of the 1940-2000 federal census data indicates that the percentage of adults age 18+ and lacking a high school diploma or its equivalency decreased from 67% in 1940 to 14% in 2000. Therefore, a reasonable projection would forecast that the 2010 census data will indicate an additional drop of 2-3%. This projection would bring the percentage range to 8-9 percent. A benchmark goal of attaining an 85-90% Iowa adult proficiency level by the year 2010 is a realistic and attainable goal.

Benchmark Goal

The overall Iowa benchmark literacy goal states that by the year 2010, 85-90% of Iowa's adult population will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The attainment of this goal is contingent on continuing to provide adult literacy classes, offered through Iowa's community colleges and related agencies, to Iowa's adult literacy target populations. The ability to quantify the attainment of this goal is through: (1) the number of Iowa High School Equivalency Diplomas issued on an annual basis, (2) the number of basic skills literacy certificates issued on an annual basis, and (3) a replication of the IASALS study in 2010 with appropriate comparisons made to the 1992 NALS study.

Overview of State Level Benchmark Results

The results of the state level benchmarks are presented in Tables 1-4. Table 1 depicts the relationship between total enrollment and the number and percentage of adult learners who received pre and post assessments. The results are as follows:

- a total of **77.27%** received pre-post assessments in Adult Basic Education which represents an increase of **18.73%** over Program Year 2001 (58.54% for Program Year 2001);
- a total of **81.64%** received pre-post assessments in Adult Secondary Education which represents an increase of **10.99%** over Program Year 2001 (70.65% for Program Year 2001);
- a total of **28.76%** received pre-post assessments in English-as-a Second Language which represents an increase of **20.96%** over Program Year 2001 (7.8% for Program Year 2001);
- a total of **65.46%** received pre-post assessments across the three instructional programs which represented an overall increase of **16.48%** over Program Year 2001 (48.98% for Program Year 2001);
- the 65.46% pre-post assessment rate met the Program Year 2002 projected target standard.

Table 2 presents a comparison of the percentage relationship among: (1) the negotiated benchmark levels, (2) the attained benchmark levels without pre-post assessment, and (3) the attained benchmark levels with pre-post assessment for the core measure of Educational Gains. The results indicated that **consistently higher benchmarks percentages were achieved across all three instructional programs for those learners who received pre-post assessments**. The results are as follows:

- The Iowa statewide adult basic education program met or exceeded **4 out of 11 (34.36%)** educational gains benchmarks when calculated against total enrollment.
- The Iowa statewide adult basic education program met or exceeded **8 out of 11 (72.73%)** educational gains benchmarks when calculated against those adult learners who were pre-post assessed.

Table 2 also indicates the educational functioning levels in which the benchmark attainment levels fell below the negotiated benchmark levels and where the attained benchmark levels met or exceeded the negotiated benchmarks for both the "Total Enrollment" and "Pre-Post Assessment" categories. The following areas **did not meet** the negotiated benchmark levels for the "Total Enrollment" category: (1) Adult Basic Education Beginning Literacy, (2) all English-as-a-Second Language educational functioning levels. The following areas **did not meet** the negotiated benchmark levels for the "Pre-Post Assessment" category: (1) Adult Basic Education Beginning Literacy, (2) English-as-a-Second Language Low Advanced, (3) English-as-a-Second Language High Advanced.¹

Table 3 presents a comparison of the percentage relationship among: (1) the negotiated benchmark levels, (2) the attained benchmark levels for the core follow-up measures. The results indicate that the **attained percentages exceeded the negotiated percentages by significant margins for the four follow-up measures**.

¹ The Federal criteria to determine whether educational gains benchmarks were successfully achieved is calculated against the "Total Enrollment" category as opposed to the "Pre/Post Assessment" category. Given this criteria, Iowa only met or exceeded 4 of 11 (36.36%) of the educational gains benchmarks. Conversely, if benchmark attainment is calculated against the pre/post assessment category, Iowa met or exceeded 8 of 11 (72.73%) of the educational gains benchmarks.

Table 4 displays the results for the number of basic skills certificates issued and the number of local programs participating for Program Years 1998 through 2002. The results indicate that the number of basic skills certificates issued during Program Year 2002 increased by **38%** over Program Year 2001.²

The Iowa statewide adult basic education program met or exceeded **9 out of 16 (56.26%)** benchmarks according to the Federal calculation criteria (e.g. calculating against the “Total Enrollment” category.) Conversely, Iowa’s statewide adult basic education program met or exceeded **13 out of 16 (81.25%) benchmarks** if the “Pre/Post Assessment” category is utilized as the criteria for benchmark calculations.

Table 1

**PRE/POST ASSESSMENT PERCENTAGE
BY INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM AND EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL**

Instructional Program	Educational Functioning Level	*Total Enrollment	**Pre/Post Assessment Enrollment	Percentage Pre/Post Assessed
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Beginning Literacy ABE	2,276	1,623	71.31%
	Beginning Basic Education ABE	1,090	688	63.12%
	Low Intermediate ABE	2,919	2,334	79.96%
	High Intermediate ABE	4,970	4,052	81.53%
	Subtotal	11,255	8,697	77.27%
Adult Secondary Education (ASE)	Low Adult Secondary Education	2,492	2,045	82.06%
	High Adult Secondary Education	623	498	79.94%
	Subtotal	3,115	2,543	81.64%
ESL/ESL/ Citizenship (ESL)	Beginning Literacy ESL	1,009	94	9.32%
	Beginning ESL	1,680	463	27.56%
	Low Intermediate ESL	1,012	357	35.28%
	High Intermediate ESL	670	256	38.21%
	Low Advanced ESL	515	227	44.08%
	High Advanced ESL	111	40	36.04%
	Subtotal	4,997	1,437	28.76%
	Total	19,367	12,677	65.46%

* **Source:** Iowa’s National Reporting System; Table 4, Column B; State Aggregated Report

** **Source:** Iowa’s National Reporting System; Table 4B, Column B; State Aggregated Report

² Refer to the report titled **Iowa’s Community College Basic Literacy Skills Credential Program Annual Report: Program Year 2002** for Iowa’s basic literacy skills certification program statistics

Table 2

**Percentage Comparison of Iowa's Adult Basic Education Program
Performance Measures For NRS Core Indicator #1**

Core Indicator #1 [Educational Gain]: Demonstrated improvements in literacy skills in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem-solving, English language acquisition and other literacy skills.

Instructional Program	Educational Functioning Level	*Negotiated %	**Total Enrollment %	***Pre/Post Assessment %
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Beginning Literacy	20	13.4	18.9
	Beginning Basic Education ABE	22	24.8	39.2
	Low Intermediate ABE	20	42.8	53.6
	High Intermediate ABE	22	43.1	52.9
English-as-a-Second Language (ESL)	Beginning Literacy ESL	26	6.1	66.0
	Beginning ESL	24	14.3	51.8
	Low Intermediate ESL	29	19.2	54.3
	High Intermediate ESL	31	20.6	53.9
	Low Advanced ESL	32	9.7	22.0
	High Advanced ESL	32	6.3	17.5
Adult Secondary Education (ASE)	Low Adult Secondary Education	32	55.0	67.0

The **Bold** percentages indicate the educational functioning levels where the achieved benchmarks for either the "Total Enrollment" category or the "Pre/Post Assessment" category **did not meet the negotiated percentage**. The "Total Enrollment" category is the criteria by which the USDE:DAEL determines whether Iowa did or did not achieve a benchmark for any given educational functioning level. The "Pre/Post Assessment" category is the criteria used by the state of Iowa to determine if benchmarks were successfully achieved for any given educational functioning level.

***Source:** *Iowa's State Plan for Adult Basic Education: Fiscal Years 2000-2004; Revised Table #12.* This column represents the negotiated percentage for the core indicators between the Iowa Department of Education and the United States Department of Education: Division of Adult Education and Literacy (USDE:DAEL).

****Source:** Iowa's National Reporting System (NRS) report for Program Year 2002 Table 4, column H. This column represents the percent of total enrollees who completed each educational functioning level based on total enrollment.

*****Source:** Iowa's National Reporting System (NRS) report for Program Year 2002 Table 4B, column H. This column represents the percent of total enrollees who were pre/post assessed with pared scores and completed each educational functioning level.

Table 3

**Percentage Comparison of Iowa's Adult Basic Education Program
Performance Measures for NRS Core Indicator #2**

Core Indicator #2 [Follow-up Measures]: Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement.

Follow-up Measure	*Negotiated Percent	**Attained Percent
Entered Employment ¹	52	73.4
Retained Employment ¹	77	80.9
Obtained a GED or Adult Secondary School Diploma ²	42	68.5
Entered Postsecondary Education or Training ³	14	27.3

***Source:** *Iowa's State Plan for Adult Basic Education: Fiscal Years 2000-2004; Revised Table #12.* This column represents the negotiated percentage for the core indicators between the Iowa Department of Education and the United States Department of Education: Division of Adult Education and Literacy (USDE:DAEL).

****Source:** Iowa's National Reporting System (NRS) report for Program Year 2002 Table 5, column G. This column represents the percent of total adult basic education enrollees who achieved each follow-up measure.

1. The percentage attained data reported for the follow-up measures of Entered Employment and Retained Employment were obtained as a result of a data match between the Iowa adult basic education electronic reporting system and the Iowa Workforce Development's base and benefits wage records for the period of July 1, 2001 through September 30, 2002 for the Entered Employment outcome measure and October 1, 2001 through September 30, 2002 for the Retained Employment outcome measure. This database is referenced as the Iowa Customer Tracking System.
2. The percentage attained data reported for the follow-up measure of Obtained a GED or Adult Secondary School Diploma were obtained as a result of a data match between the Iowa adult basic education electronic reporting system and the Iowa Department of Education's Iowa High School Equivalency Diploma database, Iowa's GED candidate data base at GEDScoring.COM and the number of Adult High School Diplomas issued.
3. The percent attained data reported for the follow-up measure of Entered Postsecondary Education and Training were obtained as a result of data matches between the Iowa adult basic education electronic reporting system and the Iowa Department of Education's Community College Management Information System for the first quarter of Program Year 2003 (July 1, 2002-September 30, 2002).

Table 4

**Percentage Comparison of Iowa's Adult Basic Education Program
Performance Measures for State of Iowa Core Indicator #3**

Core Indicator #3 [Basic Skills Certificates]: A program designed to issue basic literacy skills certificates based on the attainment of demonstrated literacy competencies at pre-established levels. **The benchmark for Iowa's Basic Skills Certification Program was to have Iowa's 15 community colleges participating in the basic skill certification program by Program Year 2002.**

Program Year	Number of Certificates Issued	Program Year % Increase	No. of Community Colleges Participating
1998	323	--	4
1999	566	75	6
2000	1,591	182	12
2001	3,214	102	15
2002	4,435	38	15
Total	10,129		

Source(s): 1. *Iowa's State Plan for Adult Basic Education: Program Years 2000-2004*; Section 5.3.1 (pp. 65-73).
2. *Iowa Basic Skills Certification Reports for Program Years 1998-2002*.

Skill Level Gains

The data presented in Graphs 1 and 2 are designed to depict the percent of skill level gains achieved in the areas of reading and mathematics. The skill level gains strategy is designed to present another methodology for measuring educational gains. A skill level value ranging from 0-5 was assigned to each NRS/CASAS based educational functioning level for the Adult Basic Education and Adult Secondary Education instructional program. For example, a skill level value of “2” was assigned to the educational functioning level titled *ABE Beginning Basic* which has a CASAS standard score range of 201-210. (See the ledgers for Graphs 1, 2 and Appendix A for a complete listing of skill level values in relation to CASAS standard score ranges and educational functioning levels).

The skill level gains graphs display the percent of the enrolled adult learners who advanced one or more skill levels from the skill level initially assigned as determined by pre-post assessment results. The graphs depict two skill level gain results for each skill level value: (1) the percent who advanced one or more skill levels from the assigned entry skill level and, (2) the percent who advanced two or more skill levels from the assigned entry skill level. For example, Graph 1 displays two percentage bars for the skill level value of “2”: (1) 25.40% of the learners initially assigned a skill level value “2” in mathematics advanced one or more skill levels, and (2) 11.85% of the learners initially assigned a skill level value of “2” in mathematics advanced two or more skill levels. Therefore, a total of 37.25% of the learners initially assigned a skill level value of “2” in mathematics made skill level advancements.

Graph 1 depicts the skill level gains in the area of mathematics. The results are as follows:

- The greatest skill level gain (43.98%), for those learners who advanced **one or more skill levels**, was at skill level “3” which is the educational functioning level titled “ABE Intermediate Low”;
- The second greatest skill level gain (32.14%), for those learners who advanced **one or more skill levels**, was at skill level “5” which is the educational functioning level titled “ASE Low”;
- The greatest skill level gain (13.88%), for those learners who advanced **two or more skill levels**, was at skill level “4” which is the educational functioning level titled “ABE Intermediate High”;
- The second greatest skill level gain (11.85%), for those learners who advanced **two or more skill levels**, was at skill level “2” which is the educational functioning level titled “ABE Beginning Basic”;
- The average skill level gain across all skill level values for those learners who advanced one or more skill levels was **31.02%**.
- The average skill level gain across all skill levels for those learners who advanced two or more skill levels was **9.59%**.

Graph 2 depicts the skill level gains in the area of reading. The results are as follows:

- The greatest skill level gain (49.07%), for those learners who advanced **one or more skill levels**, was at skill level “3” which is the educational functioning level titled “ABE Intermediate Low”;
- The second greatest skill level gain (30.62%), for those learners who advanced **one or more skill levels**, was at skill level “2” which is the educational functioning level titled “ABE Beginning Basic”;
- The greatest skill level gain (12.13%), for those learners who advanced **two or more skill levels**, was at skill level “4” which is the educational functioning level titled “ABE Intermediate High”;
- The second greatest skill level gain (9.88%), for those learners who advanced **two or more skill levels**, was at skill level “2” which is the educational functioning level titled “ABE Beginning Basic”;
- The average skill level gain across all skill level values for those learners who advanced one or more skill levels was **29.69%**.

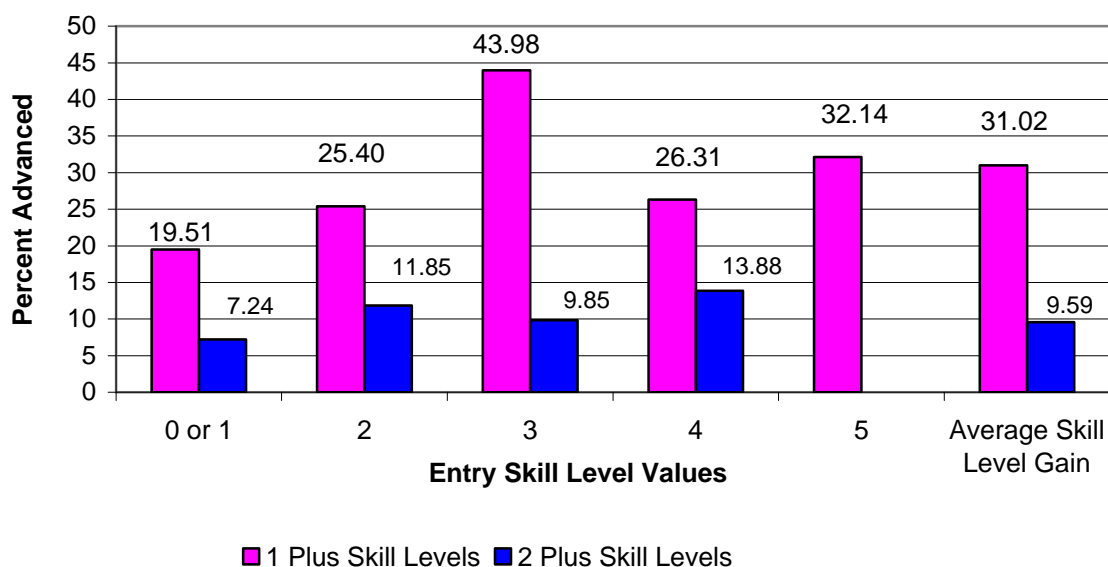
- The average skill level gain across all skill levels for those learners who advanced two or more skill levels was **6.67%**.

The following observations were extrapolated from the data presented in Graphs 1 and 2:

- There were substantial skill level gains made at **all skill levels** in the areas of reading and mathematics;
- The greatest percentage increase in skill level gains were observed at the ABE Intermediate Low educational functioning level (i.e. skill level value “3” for both mathematics and reading);
- The average percent skill level gain across all skill levels for those learners who advanced one or more skill levels was virtually the same for mathematics (31.02%) and reading (29.69%).
- There was a difference of 2.92 percent points for the average percent skill level gain for those learners **who advanced two or more skill levels**. The greatest average skill level gain was mathematics (9.59%) as compared to reading (6.67%).

GRAPH 1

**Adult Basic Education Program Percentage
Skill Level Gains for Mathematics**

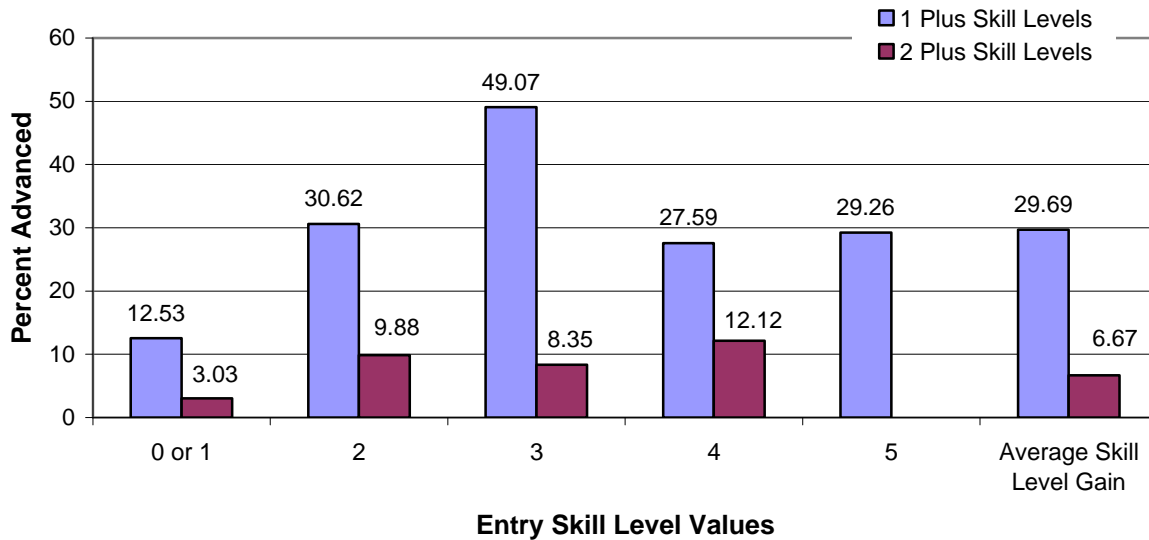


CASAS Entry Levels	CASAS Standard Score Ranges	Educational Functioning Levels	Skill Level Value	Number At Entry Skill Level	Number Advanced 1 or More Skill Levels	Number Advanced 2 or More Skill Levels
A	Under 200	ABE Beginning Literacy	0 or 1	815	159	59
B	201-210	ABE Beginning Basic	2	886	225	105
B	211-220	ABE Intermediate Low	3	2,326	1,023	229
C	221-235	ABE Intermediate High	4	3,774	993	524
D	236-245	ABE Low	5	1,761	566	n/a
TOTAL				9,562	2,966	917

Source: State Aggregated Report for Program Year 2002

GRAPH 2

Adult Basic Education Program Percentage Skill Level Gains for Reading



CASAS Entry Levels	CASAS Standard Score Ranges	Educational Functioning Levels	Skill Level Value	Number At Entry Skill Level	Number Advanced 1 or More Skill Levels	Number Advanced 2 or More Skill Levels
A	Under 200	ABE Beginning Literacy	0 or 1	990	124	30
B	201-210	ABE Beginning Basic	2	516	158	51
B	211-220	ABE Intermediate Low	3	1,294	635	108
C	221-235	ABE Intermediate High	4	3,462	955	420
D	236-245	ABE Low	5	2,871	840	n/a
TOTAL				9,133	2,712	609

Source: State Aggregated Report for Program Year 2002

SUMMARY AND OBSERVATIONS

The purpose of this section is to summarize the benchmark results for Program Year 2002 and to provide observations which can serve as the basis for program improvement. The following observations provide a summary of benchmark attainment:

- **Pre/Post Assessment Results** – An analysis of pre/post assessment results indicates that a total of 65.46% of the total enrollees who were pre assessed were also post assessed. This percentage represents a diligent effort to obtain post assessment results. **The goal for Program Year 2002 was to achieve a 60-65% pre/post assessment result for all program enrollees.**
- **Educational Gains Core Indicator** – An analysis of benchmark attainment indicates that **8 of the 11 educational functioning level benchmarks met or exceeded the negotiated benchmarks (72.7%) and 3 of the 11 benchmarks fell short of the negotiated benchmarks (27.2%).** The three educational functioning levels which did not meet the negotiated benchmarks were: (1) ABE Beginning Literacy, (2) Low Advanced ESL, (3) High Advanced ESL.
- **Iowa's Basic Literacy Skills Certification Program Core Indicator** – An analysis of benchmark attainment indicates that there was a **38% increase** in the number of basic skills certificates issued during Program Year 2002 as compared to Program Year 2001. This increase is significant since all fifteen community colleges participated in the program beginning in Program Year 2001.
- **Follow-Up Core Measures** – Iowa **exceeded the negotiated benchmark levels** for the four follow-up core indicators (100% attainment).
- **Benchmark Attainment Performance** – The Iowa statewide adult basic education program met or exceeded **9 out of 16 (56%)** benchmarks according to the Federal calculation criteria (e.g. calculating against the "Total Enrollment" category). Conversely, Iowa's statewide adult basic education program met or exceeded **13 out of 16 (81%)** benchmarks if the "Pre/Post Assessment" category is utilized for benchmark calculations.
- **Overall Benchmark Attainment-During Program Year 2002** – **Iowa's statewide adult basic education program met or exceeded 13 of the 16 benchmark levels (81%)** as compared to a **68%** achievement level for Program Year 2001.
- **Skill Level Gains:** Skill level gains were achieved at all educational functioning levels. The highest percentage skill level gains were observed at the intermediate educational functioning levels.

Program Year 2002 was the second year that Iowa's statewide ABE program has reported benchmarks based on aggregated state data which met all of the NRS criteria. The main areas of focus for benchmark improvement during Program Year 2003 are: (1) low level literacy educational functioning levels, and (2) ESL programs. The areas in which the benchmarks were successfully attained by the majority of the local program providers were: (1) intermediate ABE, advanced ABE and ASE educational functioning levels, (2) entered employment, (3) GED diploma attainment, and (4) entered post-secondary education and training.

In summary, it is observed that there was definite improvement between Program Year 2001 and Program Year 2002 regarding the percentage of adult learners who were pre-post assessed and the percentage of benchmarks which were successfully achieved. This improvement pattern clearly demonstrates the principles of Iowa's benchmark improvement model. **The major focus area for benchmark attainment improvement during Program Year 2003 will be the English-as-a-Second Language instructional program.** This report provides base line benchmark data against which succeeding program year's benchmark data can be evaluated. The benchmark data can serve as the basis for local and state program improvement for Program Year 2003. **The overall goal for benchmark improvement for Program Year 2003 is to increase benchmark attainment from 81% to 95%.**